

## WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for verifying a digital postage mark, the method comprising the steps of:  
  
scanning a mail item to obtain a digital image of the mail item, the mail item including a digital postage mark and a destination address block;  
  
parsing the digital image to obtain a digital postage mark area and a destination address block area;  
  
extracting a first portion of the destination address block from the destination address block area;  
  
generating a first address block image digest using the first portion of the destination address block;  
  
retrieving a second address block image digest from the digital postage mark area;  
  
comparing the first address block image digest to the second address block image digest; and  
  
accepting the mail item when the comparison of the first address block image digest to the second address block image digest is within a predetermined threshold.
2. The method of claim 1 comprising the further step of:  
  
rejecting the mail item when the comparison of the first address block image digest to the second address block image digest is beyond a predetermined threshold.
3. The method of claim 1 wherein the second address block image digest is in a cryptographic validation code in the digital postage mark area.

4. A method for generating a mail item, the method comprising the steps of:  
generating an address block image digest using a first portion of a destination address block of the mail item;  
using the address block image digest as a recoverable portion of a cryptographic validation code;  
formatting the recoverable portion of a cryptographic validation code with other postal data for digital postage mark information computation; and  
printing the digital postage mark information on one of the mail item, label or tag;
5. A method for verifying a digital postage mark, the method comprising the steps of:  
using first digital data that is created during digital postage mark generation process from a digital image of a destination address block;  
including the first digital data into a recoverable portion of a digital signature; and  
imprinting a digital postage mark on a mailpiece, the digital postage mark including the digital signature.
6. The method of claim 5, comprising the further steps of:  
scanning the mailpiece to obtain a digital image of the mailpiece, the mailpiece including the digital postage mark and a destination address block;  
retrieving a representative portion of a destination address block image in its original form from the digital signature;  
comparing the representative portion of the destination address block image with the second digital data obtained from the scanned destination address block;

accepting the mailpiece when the comparison of the representative portion of the destination address block image with the second digital data is within a predetermined threshold.

7. The method of claim 6 comprising the further step of:

rejecting the mailpiece when the comparison of the representative portion of the destination address block image with the second digital data is beyond a predetermined threshold.